

## to the Bulge

Some of Camp's fellow soldiers helped him out of that foxhole, his leg bleeding. His sergeant asked Camp if he could make it up the hill to tell the captain about the unit's casualties and wounded soldiers. He said he could.

"I limped my way up there and told him," Camp says. "By that time, they started shelling us again."

This time, Camp sought cover under an overhanging rock in a snowdrift, where he stayed for an hour and a half. After that, he walked a mile and a half back down the mountain toward the first aid station.

"I got about 300 feet from the aid station and passed out colder than a cucumber," he recalls. "I'd lost too much blood. It was sloshing in my boot. It was 4 o'clock the next morning before I had surgery on my leg."

He ended up staying in the hospital for six weeks, where he celebrated Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. When he got out, he was the only one left from his squad of 15 and only one of 25 left from his original company of 250.

"They really hit us after I left," he said.

On Jan. 4, 1945, Camp was back on the front line with what was left of his unit, "which wasn't much," he says.

Camp didn't know it at the time, but he was on the east flank of what became known as the Battle of the Bulge, the largest land battle of World War II in which the United States participated. More than 1 mil-

that Camp acquired one of his most prized pieces of World War II memorabilia.

He was charged with guarding a radio station when a car came through his checkpoint. As another soldier talked with the driver, Camp surveyed the back seat. Under a pile of coats and blankets, he found six cases of guns and six cases of ammunition that the driver was attempting to smuggle into the mountains. They confiscated it, threw half of it in the river and distributed the other half to the company. The gun Camp got was an Italian .32-caliber automatic Beretta.

"I can't even get ammunition for it anymore," Camp said, with a smile.

Innsbruck is also where Camp received the news everyone had been waiting to hear.

"When we came into Innsbruck, the trucks all had their headlights on," he remembers. "We couldn't figure out what was going on. We came to find out the war was over."

## Liberating Dachau

In 1986, Camp put together a narrative of his memories from the war. In it, he talks about his "worst memory." That came on April 19, 1945, when his regiment helped break down the gates of the Dachau concentration camp, where thousands of Jews were being held.

"The concentration camp was a very gruesome place and it really shook everybody up how they could be so hard, so ruthless," Camp said in the narrative.

His regiment released 10,000

his father picked up the telephone.

"Where are you?" his father asked.

"New York City," Camp said.

"You can't be."

"Why?"

"Well, I just got a letter from Germany from you today."

About a week later, he made it back to Tacoma and was discharged on April 1, 1946.

"We were all wondering when we left down toward the gate if it was for real or if it was an April Fool's joke. But they said, 'You're free to go.'"

He headed to live with his parents, who were in Washington state at the time. While there, he earned his high school diploma, graduating in a class with one of his sisters.

## Life after the war

Camp went on to attend college in Boise, Idaho, and Des Moines, Iowa, where he studied to be a minister. He served churches in the Upper Midwest and in southern California. His wife and three children moved to Brookings in 1965, and never left.

The Camps served as lay preachers here. Camp also drove school bus for the Brookings School District for 10 years and worked for the University Police Department at SDSU for 20 years.

He is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans. He has been the state chaplain for the organization for 18 years and is currently the commander for the Brookings chapter.